

## **MEETING SUMMARY: INTERMODAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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### **Meeting Time and Location**

The first meeting of the Intermodal Advisory Council for the *Louisiana State Transportation Plan Update* was held April 18, 2001 at the Baton Rouge Marriott. The Intermodal Advisory Council is composed of 38 representatives, each of whom is also a member of one of the other seven Advisory Councils. As such, the Intermodal Advisory Council is interested in a wide range of topics that impact all modes in every part of the state. The group is also intently interested in the financial component of the state plan update. This Council did not meet in New Orleans at the First Transportation Conference (July 2000), although its members participated because of their affiliation with other Advisory Councils.

### **Meeting Attendees**

Following is a listing of the 20 individuals that attended this Advisory Council meeting. Of those in attendance, 2 are members of the Council. The meeting was facilitated by Dale Janik (Wilbur Smith Associates), Scott Sanders (Wilbur Smith Associates), and Eric Kalivoda (DOTD).

### **Advisory Council Members/Representatives**

- ❑ Darrel Saizan, New Orleans Airport
- ❑ Shelby LaSalle, for Glen Smith, Louisiana Airport Authority

### **Non-Member DOTD Staff**

- ❑ Nick Verret, DOTD –District 8
- ❑ Brian Parsons, DOTD – Railroads
- ❑ Carol Cranshaw, DOTD – Public Transportation
- ❑ Eric Kalivoda, DOTD Deputy Assistant Secretary

### **Consultant Team Members**

- ❑ Mike Maynard, Wilbur Smith Associates
- ❑ Scott Sanders, Wilbur Smith Associates
- ❑ Mookie Patel, GCR and Associates
- ❑ Dot McConnell, NPWI
- ❑ Anne-Marie Rooskens, UNO College of Urban & Public Affairs
- ❑ Dale Janik, Wilbur Smith Associates (Presenter/Facilitator)

### **Others**

- ❑ Grayling Hadrott, Acadiana Regional Development District
- ❑ Chester Wilmot, LRTC/LSU
- ❑ J. Kent Rogers, NLCOG/City of Bossier City
- ❑ Josh Gregoraski, FHWA Georgia Division/NORPC

- ❑ Sean Hunter, New Orleans Airport Authority
- ❑ John Irion, South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission
- ❑ Annie Orillac, Monroe Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ Jim Harvey, New Orleans RPC
- ❑ Maggie Woodruff, New Orleans Regional Chamber of Commerce

### **Meeting Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting was to provide Advisory Council members with an overview of the Plan Update, a review of intermodal related elements discussed at the first Statewide Transportation Conference held in New Orleans on July 31-August 1, 2000, and to discuss strategic issues and suggested changes to the overall goals and objectives included in the 1996 *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan* (SITP).

The Advisory Council was presented with a brief overview of the Plan Update project, including major elements, timeline, and products. Included in the overview was an explanation of the role of the recently created Statewide Intermodal Transportation and Economic Development Policy Commission. This 13-member Commission will evaluate and rank all major transportation-related economic development improvements proposed for the Plan. Each Advisory Council must soon designate a chair to represent the Council's position at Policy Commission meetings. Lacking a sufficient number of Advisory Council members in attendance, the Council opted to make this decision in the coming months.

### **Summary of Meeting Comments**

The Council was also given a brief overview of major "intermodal" elements contained in the 1996 *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan*. These are as follows, with comments from the Council:

- ❑ Improve coordination among intermodal planning, program management and management systems while preserving and enhancing modal identity – with the exception of the rail section, this has been accomplished.
- ❑ Develop a program of public education, marketing and promotion of intermodalism – accomplished through the DED.
- ❑ Expand rail/highway grade crossing program – additional federal and state dollars have been allocated to triple the program to \$9 million annually. This area is of significant concern to the Council and others. Members mentioned several other ongoing studies concerning rail safety and rail bottlenecks and advocated exploring ITS applications for freight rail.
- ❑ Establish a Multimodal Passenger Hub Fund – the Council endorses passenger rail in Louisiana and recommended that potential routes/connections be identified and prioritized for inclusion in the Plan and to allow feasibility studies to begin on those that are of the highest priority.
- ❑ Develop and implement a statewide policy relating intermodal transportation planning with economic development objectives – UNO study is to be completed in June 2001.

- ❑ Establish a statewide Intermodal Transportation Economic Development Program for industrial recruitment and expansion – EDAP program used state general revenues, but limited funding restricted its impact.
- ❑ Establish a statewide fund to acquire abandoned railroad rights-of-way – several members see this as very important, in that it represents an optimum way to preserve alternative routing for future parallel passenger rail routes. Acquisition of abandoned rail right-of-way could be a key ingredient toward implementing light rail between New Orleans International Airport and downtown. Acquisition of a parallel right-of-way removes one of the restrictions to successful passenger rail: the amount of conflict with longer, slower-moving freight trains using shared track.
- ❑ Expand public awareness and law enforcement officer training to improve safety at rail-highway grade crossings – *Operation Lifesaver* has been implemented, but struggles due to limited financing.
- ❑ Lobby for release of a significant portion of the Federal Airport and Airways Trust Fund and the Federal Highway Trust Fund to the states – Louisiana sought increased federal funding with good success – now that reauthorization is approaching, the state needs to prepare its new federal strategy and educate its delegation.
- ❑ Study improving coordination and/or consolidating some of the economic development functions of the eight planning districts, local economic development agencies and the MPOs -- intermodal directory created for DED use, but did not enjoy widespread dissemination – the directory could be updated and posted on the State Plan website.
- ❑ Create an intermodal terminal access improvement program – recognizes the importance of maximizing intermodal efficiencies by improving “connectors.” The state system has adopted the connector designation, and the MPOs have funded some improvements. Continued success must address jurisdictional issues (not all connectors are on the State highway system), priorities (MPOs/cities typically place higher priority on improvements in developing areas as opposed to improving connectors to intermodal facilities), and funding. Element M-3 was developed to improve landside port access.
- ❑ Establish a high capacity passenger link between New Orleans International Airport and the CBD.
- ❑ Upgrade the existing Almonaster Avenue/CSX Transportation bridge spanning the Industrial Canal in New Orleans to eliminate operational bottlenecks.
- ❑ Establish consistency in eminent domain authority between modes – the Council recognizes this involves authorizing legislation, but intermodal improvements requiring land acquisition are subject to stalling completely if the initiating agency does not have eminent domain authority – condemnation is not a strong enough tool for local agencies and airport/water port authorities.
- ❑ Study developments of soft infrastructure to support the air cargo and maritime industries (I.e. international banking and freight forwarders) – there is a pending scope of services, but DED has not yet proceeded with initiating the study.

Following are comments from the Advisory Council concerning the plan's goals:

- ❑ Goal 1 – add “safety” to the overall wording
- ❑ Goal 3 – add an objective: Louisiana should be a gateway for Latin American trade.
- ❑ Goal 6 – the Council believes this goal could be broken into a number of separate goal statements concerning:
  - Efficiency
  - Limit air, water, noise pollution
  - Reduce dependency on foreign energy sources
  - Preserve historic, cultural, and environmentally sensitive sites
  - Promote natural beauty of the state
  - Enhance quality of life
- ❑ Goal 6 – add an objective concerning establishing a strong dialogue between state resource agencies (business, industry, state, federal) to help advance the planning process (support environmental streamlining).
- ❑ Goal 7 – the Council took issue with the wording of this goal, with the following comments:
  - Add “Initiate a comprehensive review of financing options, tax and fiscal reform” as an objective.
  - “Investigate toll financing” should be an objective
  - “Create/advocate a state toll authority” should be an objective
  - “Consideration of innovative financing tools like local option taxes, private financing, tax increment financing, and state infrastructure banks” should be included as an objective.
  - Strike the word “existing” from revenue sources – implies we are unwilling to consider new sources.